British Waterways

A GUIDE TO CYCLING & WALKING AROUND SANDWELL

TELFORD, TITFORD AND THE TITANIC

Walking and cycling is an ideal way to appreciate the diversity of Sandwell's 14 historic canals and branches.

The waterside landscape is filled with reminders of the area's important industrial past, such as the magnificent Galton Bridge, constructed in 1829 by Thomas Telford, and the Engine Arm Aqueduct, built to carry the Engine Arm Canal above The New Main Line 20 feet below. Just a few miles away, an abundance of wildlife flourishes in the tranquil waters of the Titford Pool and the Ridgeacre Branch bring a diversity of plant and animal species right into the heart of the town.

This handy guide is a brief introduction to some of the great walks and cycle routes just waiting to be discovered in Sandwell.

GALTON VALLEY WALK

Canals, wildlife, industrial heritage or just walking in pleasant surroundings, Galton Valley has something to suit all. We've chosen a circular route featuring The Old Main Line and a pleasant woodland area.

Location: Galton Valley, Sandwell
Start / Finish:
Galton Valley Heritage Centre
Distance: 2 miles/3 km (approx)
Duration: 45 mins (approx)
Type: Circular
Conditions: Hard surfaced/steps in places/some areas can be rough or muddy
Access point:
Brasshouse Lane, Smethwick
Car parking: Galton Valley Heritage Centre, Brasshouse Lane

1. We recommend you start your walk at Galton Valley Canal Heritage Centre – a former public house. The Centre offers visitors the opportunity to travel back into the past and enjoy an introduction to the canals of the area.

2. Take a right turn out of the centre and walk along, following the brown sign for Smethwick Pumping Station onto the towpath of The Old Main Line.

3. The pumping station, an example of Victorian engineering was originally opened in 1892 and used to pump water from the bottom level of the canal to the top in the days of heavy boat traffic. You can arrange a visit at the Galton Valley Canal Heritage Centre.

4. Walking past the Station, continue along The Old Main Line towards the Summit Tunnel.

5. Just before the tunnel take the steps off to the left leading to a wooded area.

6. Follow this path as it doubles back between The Old Main Line and The New Main Line. Steps at the end of the path rejoin the Old Main Line.

7. Turn right and retrace your steps back to the heritage centre.

Alternatively, walk down the steps and explore The New Main Line. A stroll to the west will lead you to Galton Bridge, the largest single span bridge at the time of its creation. Look out for a variety of wild flowers, attracting birds and butterflies you wouldn't expect to find here.

NEPTUNE WALK

The Neptune is a circular 4 mile walk along the quiet New Main Line, and Old Main Line Canals. It also makes an excellent cycle route, and finishes next to a pub.

Location: Neptune Health Park, Tipton, Sandwell
Start / Finish: Neptune Health Park
Distance: 4 miles/6.5km (approx)
Duration: 1 hour 20 mins (approx)
Type: Circular
Conditions: Hard surfaced/flat/using existing towpaths
Access point: Owen Street, Tipton
Car parking: Neptune Health Park

1. Walk round to the right of Neptune Health Centre, cross the bridge and face the canal. Turn right onto the towpath. Cross the first footbridge and, facing the canal, turn left onto The Old Main Line.

2. Follow the towpath downhill, along the scenic Factory Locks. Look out for the rope markings cut into Wood Street Bridge and the split bridge at one of the locks, designed to let the towing rope pass through and save unhitching the horse. After passing a picnic area to the left, cross a small bridge and continue along the canal, looking out for the boat yard on the left.

3. Continue along the towpath, over several more bridges. Notice the railway line to your left; many of the first railways were built following established canal routes.

4. When you reach Dudley Port Junction, walk across both of the iron footbridges and proceed to your left along the Netherton Branch.

5. Follow the sloped access on the right up to Tividale Aqueduct and turn right. Continue along the towpath of The Old Main Line.

6. After the Tipton Green Bridge, climb the steps onto the road, turn left onto Beehive Walk and walk under Owen Street Bridge.

7. Double back over the bridge and return to the Neptune car park.

CYCLE ROUTES

The routes described form part of the Birmingham and Black Country Cycle Routes. Numerous points of interest can be found along their varying landscapes.

If you are feeling particularly energetic, why not cycle more than one route? The map highlights access points and road accesses, but parking may be on road in places.

RUSHALL JUNCTION TO RYDER GREEN LOCKS

Distance: 7.5 miles/12 km (approx)
Duration: 1 hour 15 min (approx)
Access point: Ray Hall Lane, Grove Vale. Following Cycle Route 5, access and cross the Tame Valley and continue, turning left at Ocker Hill. This route features an unusual aqueduct; one of the few examples of a canal crossing over a railway.

DUDLEY PORT CIRCULAR

Distance: 8.8 miles/14 km (approx)
Duration: 1 hour 15 min (approx)
Access point:
Owen Street, Tipton, Sandwell
Car Parking: Neptune Health Park, Tipton, access The New Main Line via Neptune Walk instructions.

Follow The Gower Branch, then turn right back onto The Old Main Line. For a more challenging route, continue along The New Main Line and cross at Bromford Junction. Take the ramp access to The Old Main Line and double back, crossing Blakeley Hall Bridge. Alternatively follow The New Main Line into Birmingham City Centre.

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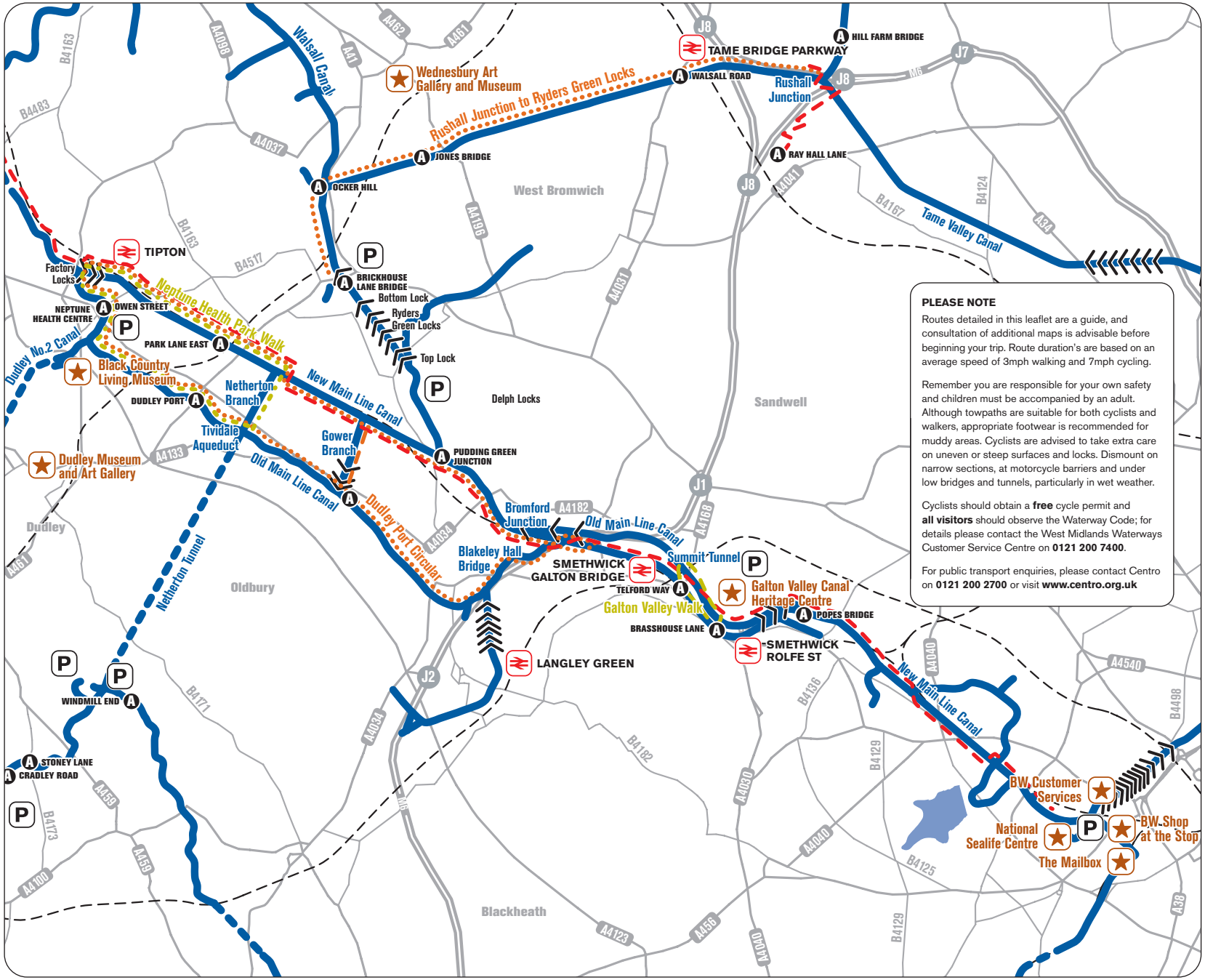
British Waterways

WHERE TO GO CYCLING & WALKING AROUND THE SANDWELL AREA

KEY

- Cycling Route
- Walking Route
- National Cycling Route
- Rail Station
- Car Park
- Attraction
- Lock
- Access Point
- Canal
- Tunnel
- Road
- Railway
- Motorway



PLEASE NOTE

Routes detailed in this leaflet are a guide, and consultation of additional maps is advisable before beginning your trip. Route duration's are based on an average speed of 3mph walking and 7mph cycling.

Remember you are responsible for your own safety and children must be accompanied by an adult. Although towpaths are suitable for both cyclists and walkers, appropriate footwear is recommended for muddy areas. Cyclists are advised to take extra care on uneven or steep surfaces and locks. Dismount on narrow sections, at motorcycle barriers and under low bridges and tunnels, particularly in wet weather.

Cyclists should obtain a **free** cycle permit and **all visitors** should observe the Waterway Code; for details please contact the West Midlands Waterways Customer Service Centre on **0121 200 7400**.

For public transport enquiries, please contact Centro on **0121 200 2700** or visit **www.centro.org.uk**

Sources of further information:

West Midlands Waterways
Customer Service Centre
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T 0121 200 7400
E enquiries.wmw@britishwaterways.co.uk
www.britishwaterways.co.uk
www.waterscape.com

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